

Dames of distinction

Museum exhibits Arcadia women's historical firsts

By Kevin Felt
STAFF WRITER

ARCADIA — From mayors and jockeys to policewomen and firefighters, a handful of pioneering women is being recognized by the Arcadia Historical Museum with an exhibit titled "Daring Dames: Women's Firsts in Arcadia."

Mostly told through photographs, scrapbooks and newspaper clippings, the small exhibit, which focuses on some notable contributions of women in the city, will be on display through the end of April.

"The definition of a dame is a woman of rank, station or authority," said Curator Marny Hackley. "That's kind of what I was looking for."

Some of the achievements are historic: Clara Baldwin, daughter of Arcadia founder Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin, was issued the city's first liquor license soon after the city's incorporation in 1903. Florence Williams became the city's first woman police officer in 1945. Christine Van Maanen became the Arcadia's first female city clerk in 1956.

More obstacles were overcome in the 1970s and '80s: Floretta Lauber became Arcadia's first woman mayor in 1976. Phyllis Tomkins became Arcadia's first woman Rotarian in 1987. Ruth Gilb became the first female president of the Arcadia Tournament of Roses Association in 1983.

But still, some gender barriers were not broken until recently: Beth Decoteau became the city's first female firefighter in late 2003. At Santa Anita Park race track on Oct. 25, 2003, Hall of Fame jockey Julie Krone became the first woman to win a Breeders' Cup race.

"There are still a lot of firsts to achieve," said Hackley. "Arcadia still hasn't had a female fire chief, police chief or city manager. There are still a lot of positions that are kind of run by men. We're still making inroads."

Lauber said she is pleased to be included in the display, which includes a portrait of her painted while she was mayor and the gown she wore to Arcadia's Bicentennial Ball in 1976.

"We have broken a lot of barriers and it wasn't easy," she said, explaining when she first started serving on the Arcadia Planning Commission in the 1960s, she had to use her husband's name. "The saying, that we've come a long way, baby, is true."

Until her retirement two years ago,



Staff photo by JOHN KENNEDY

A PORTRAIT of Floretta Lauber, Arcadia's first woman mayor, hangs at the Arcadia Historical Museum next to the gown she wore at the 1976 Mayor's Ball.

Louise Brandsma worked for 33 years in the Arcadia Police Department. She started in 1969 as a clerk, then became a reserve officer in 1975. In 1978, she became the department's first female patrol officer and became the first woman sergeant in 1983.

"I think it's an honor to be included," said the Chino resident.

Though it was not easy being a pioneer, Brandsma said the other officers respected her and treated her "like a sister."

Because she could not display everything in the exhibit, Hackley also added an interactive component to it, inviting visitors to post information about other notable women's firsts in Arcadia on a

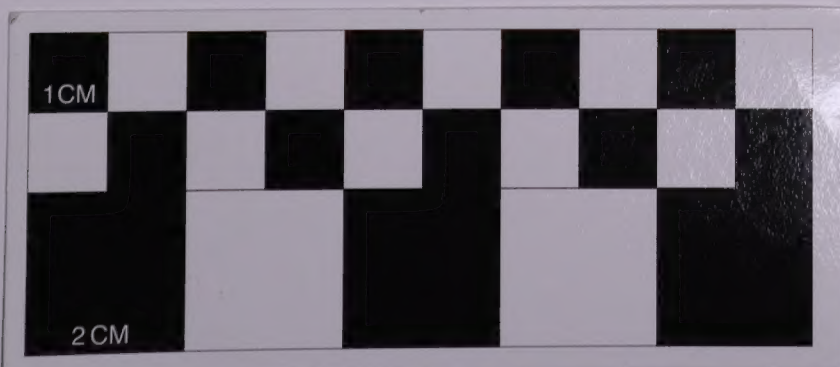
bulletin board.

"I'm continuing to find out things," she said. "This is a place, where if (visitors) know a daring dame in their life or someone we missed, they can put something up."

Several of the women will participate in a panel discussion from 2 to 4 p.m. March 28, next door at the Arcadia Community Center.

The Ruth and Charles Gilb Arcadia Historical Museum is at 380 W. Huntington Drive. For more information, call (626) 574-5440.

Kevin Felt can be reached at (626) 578-6300, Ext. 4454, or by e-mail at kevin.felt@sgun.com.



teams' musical selections showcase their wit.

On Spirit's 50th martian day, the daily song was "Samba De Marte," by Beth Carvalho. She wrote the song after hearing that one of her songs had woken up Mars Pathfinder's Sojourner rover in 1997. In the song, she sings about waking up a rover on Carnival Day, and Adler played it on the first day of Brazil's Mardi Gras carnival.

"I find when I look at the list of songs, it really helps me to remember what happened. I connect back to the emotions of what happened on that day," Adler said.

The scientists can also recall the mission's progress by thinking back on the names they gave the various martian rock and soil targets and features along the rovers' routes.

Crisp said the team was trained to pick appropriate names based on what the features look like. For example, a target called "Guadalupe" is named after the Guadalupe

At times, the team gets too playful with the names and they have to be changed later, Adler said. For example, scientists originally dubbed one of Opportunity's targets, "Snout." Once they realized it was going to be a real target they would have to discuss in press conferences, the scientists changed it to "Stone Mountain."

The scientists need these small breaks from their duties monitoring the rovers, planning their daily activities and analyzing feedback. On average, they work 10-hour days. But they often stay on to finish up their duties. Since the two rovers' teams work on shifts 12 hours apart, their respective wake-up songs serve a second purpose, Crisp said. When she has heard two tunes during one shift, she knows she has been working too long.

Kim Groshong can be reached at (626) 578-6300, Ext. 4451, or by e-mail at kimm.groshong@sgvn.com.

more than a year.

The district's other band teachers are also working on the project, as are several consultants. About \$75,000 has been raised so far to cover staff, uniforms and instruments, said Joan Favre, executive director of the Pasadena Educational Foundation.

The band has conditional acceptance: Tournament officials will monitor rehearsals and performances throughout the year to ensure that it is making progress.

"They want bands that are big, loud, but good," Willett said. "Big and loud's not hard, but good is."

Bands typically practice for years to march in the parade, which has a competitive selection process, and tend to be highly decorated. For example, last year's parade included an Iowa high school band that had received more than 40 consecutive Division I ratings in the state marching band contest.

Temple City High School's 216-member group, which made its first appearance last year, had earned more than 20 first-place or sweepstakes awards.

Preference, at least recently, seems to have been given to hometown bands. In 2003, Arcadia resident Gary Thomas

served as tournament president and Arcadia High School marched in the parade with 308 members. In 2004, the year Temple City High was in the parade, the tournament president was Temple City resident Mike Riffey.

This year's Tournament president, Dave Davis, lives in Pasadena.

Willett, 29, said the goal is to develop a band that will outlive the preparations for the 2005 Rose Parade.

"Basically, this project is to do one major event a year and to do the Rose Parade every three or four years," Willett said.

Tammy Baghdassarian, an 11th-grader at Muir High School who has been rehearsing with the band since November, said the musicians are readying for auditions at the end of March.

"The first time we did it together, it was kind of unorganized, but it's getting better," said Baghdassarian, 16, a percussion player. "I haven't worked with (Willett) yet, but everyone said she was really good. Everyone likes her."

Gretchen Hoffman can be reached at (626) 578-6300, Ext. 4494, or by e-mail at gretchen.hoffman@sgvn.com.

it reaches 50 or 60 years old.

"The areas that are really old are extremely explosive. Monrovia peak and Santa Anita Canyon, that stuff is 80 years old," Minnich said. "If you look at Chaparral, it's taller

But many of proposed projects are still in the planning stages, he said.

To help with the projects, the rest of the national forests are loaning Forest Service

has its flaws, board president Mike Babcock said, but is a step in the right direction.

"We're certainly going to make the most informed decision that we can," Babcock said.

Member Bill Bibbiani said the board has been presented with a lot of numbers but not much explanation as to what they mean.

"It's going to be guesswork," Bibbiani said, referring to the decision whether to send out layoff notices. "The process is so bogged down in numerology, jargon and platitudes that I don't think it's headed anywhere."

Some board members criticize the subcommittee concept itself, saying that only a portion of the board knows what's going on with the budget. Others say the limited visibility — unlike regular board meetings, subcommittee meetings are not televised — robs members of vital public comment.

"The budget is too important to be left to a subcommittee," Bibbiani said. "I hope the subcommittee realizes that their silence is tantamount to a recommendation supporting the status quo."

Pearl Iizuka, who resigned at the end of February as the district's assistant superintendent of business services, said PUSD staff have been

who wanted to give input could do so at the subcommittee meetings.

Honowitz said he thinks it is too soon to solicit public input.

"I think that as we get closer to specific recommendations, there's more for the public to comment on," Honowitz said. "Most people really want to know, 'How's it going to affect my school, my child?' To me, it's a little premature to have a huge amount of public comment."

Bibbiani, who is calling for the district to make \$800,000 in cuts to the administrative work force, said it is foolish to think the district will make cuts without direction from the board.

"There's a curious complacency on the part of some board members which has

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